

MUSIC ACADEMY Of The West SUMMER FESTIVAL '81 } NEWS

THEO ALCANTARA, Artistic Director / Susanne L. Byars, Executive Director
1070 Fairway Road, Santa Barbara, California 93108 • Phone (805) 969-4726

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THEO ALCANTARA RE-ENGAGED AS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF MUSIC ACADEMY,
SANTA BARBARA, CALIF., FOR TWO YEAR PERIOD

Theo Alcantara has been re-engaged for a period of two years as Artistic Director of the Music Academy of the West, according to an announcement recently made by Arthur R. Gaudi, President of the Board.

The Summer Festival of 1981, first under Maestro Alcantara's direction, was one of the most successful in the Academy's history according to the Board's Annual Report. Box office figures indicated series sales up forty percent, single ticket sales up eighty percent and overall concert attendance up eighteen percent in a performance schedule which included thirteen concerts, three performances of the opera "Romeo et Juliette" and one special fund-raising benefit recital. The number of concerts was doubled and many events at the Lobero Theater sold out. Statistics indicated a marked increase in attendance by out of town patrons.

The Academy, with its distinguished Faculty, continued to attract students from here and abroad. Numbering one hundred and fifty, they were selected from over five hundred applicants, represented thirty-two states and seven countries including Mainland China.

Highlights of the summer season saw the return of former Academy students Benita Valente, Paul Katz and Donald Weilerstein of the Cleveland Quartet and Judith Beckmann; a sold-out recital by Itzhak Perlman and Jerome Lowenthal, followed by a mini-recital given at Lehmann Hall at the Academy specifically for the student roster; master classes by renowned opera director Tito Capobianco, the Cleveland Quartet and Nathaniel Rosen, and a most successfully received Music Academy Week during which the students performed a series of free concerts at historic sites throughout the city of Santa Barbara.

Plans for Summer Festival '82 are currently being formulated and will be announced shortly.

THEO ALCANTARA

Conductor

Theo Alcantara, Music Director of the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra and newly appointed Music Director of the Music Academy of the West Summer Festival, stands acclaimed as one of the most dynamic and sought-after conductors today.

Equally in demand on both orchestra and opera podiums, in recent seasons Maestro Alcantara has made debuts with a number of major opera companies throughout the United States and South America. Among them were his 1978 Metropolitan Opera tour performances of "Don Giovanni" in Detroit and at Wolf Trap, his 1977 debut with the Washington Opera in "L'Elisir d'Amore," later returning to conduct "Don Pasquale" and "La Traviata," his August 1980 debut with the Teatro Colon, Buenos Aires in "Tales of Hoffmann," and his summer 1979 appearance with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

During the 1980-81 season Mr. Alcantara returned to guest conduct the Pittsburgh Opera in performances of "Tosca," and the Kansas City Philharmonic.

Highlights of his 1981-82 season will include his New York City Opera debut conducting "I Puritani" in New York and Los Angeles, and his Miami Opera debut in "La Traviata," in addition to return engagements with the San Diego Opera in "Turandot" and the San Diego Opera Festival in Verdi's Requiem.

An internationally renowned guest conductor with orchestras, Maestro Alcantara has directed the Berlin Radio Orchestra, National Orchestra of Spain, Detroit Symphony, Copenhagen

more...

Radio Orchestra, National Orchestra of Mexico, Miami Philharmonic, Madrid RTV and Grant Park Festival Orchestra, among others.

Theo Alcantara was born in Cuenca, Spain, and began his musical training as a choir boy in a Spanish seminary at the age of seven. He later received diplomas in piano and composition from the Real Conservatorio de Musica in Madrid. During his student days, he toured as a concert pianist and accompanist throughout Spain, France and North Africa. He received his diploma in conducting at the Akademie Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria, during which time he was appointed associate conductor of the Camerata Academia Orchestra and was later awarded the Lilli Lehman Medal for his outstanding achievements as a conductor.

In 1964, Maestro Alcantara was engaged as conductor with the Frankfurt Opera Theatre in Germany, an appointment which he held until 1966, the year he won the Silver Medal at the Mitropoulos International Conducting Competition.

THEO ALCANTARA notes 30 june 1981

hire faculty. select artists for series

if presenting cleveland quartet, itzhak perlman, gary graffman
is a risk, I love it

had to happen

studying his score in the small office upstairs

keeping an ear and eye-- learning

and that's the year

singher leaving end this summer. reorganize vocal dept. big shoes

began oworking sept. 1, 1980

phoenix-- entering my fourth season. fasting growing city in the u.s.
trying to ____ grow- style of growth. _____ that orch should grow
in that ratio

my belief that the phoenix sym in the next 2 years accomplish big goals

closer and closer to reaching salaries as they should be
will in next 2 years become newest major orchestra
proximity to university in tempe. personnel. many players
couldn't keep all dates.

audiences growing f _____. would like to see lines
orch plays 12 pairs, chamber orch. 4 pairs
plans: 36 week season. very varied sophistication.
coming from michigan. new music very favorably. american
composers. established composers who were best left

_____ before.: bernstein, ives, copland.

tp stay/ a major orch in southwest. score in front of him
this summer could be an overture to what we are going to do.

to serve the cause of music and to give the students the opportunity
final goal-- to provide santa barbara with a summer music festival
never jeopardize the benefit of the students.

performance every week. chamber sym members out of festival orch,
and roatating-- alternate weeks they play. the chamber orchestra
has been formed so that the students can be exposed to bach,
mÙzart, beethoven. new dimension: new programs ch
instead of 6 hours on the beach, they can spend only 4. ch. sym will
rotate personnel

will not change number of students. unique: music academy has kept its
size. I am not interested to fall into the trap of bigger, bigger
160 students this year, 135 last year. dormitories sleep 130
auditioned 510 people this year, took 155. for the first time,



use
People

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CONTACT: Susanne L. Byars
Executive Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OCTOBER 10, 1980

ALCANTARA APPOINTMENT:

The appointment of Theo Alcantara, Music Director of the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra, as Artistic Director and Conductor of the Music Academy of the West Summer Festival has been announced by Board President Arthur Gaudi. Alcantara succeeds Maurice Abravanel, who retired recently after twenty-six (26) years in the post.

The Music Academy, located in Santa Barbara, California, has for many years attracted leading faculty and student artists from throughout the United States and abroad. In accepting the appointment, Maestro Alcantara characterized the Academy as, "A truly unique institution", and added that he intends, "to build upon the foundation of excellence with which the Academy has distinguished itself since its creation in 1946".

Gaudi hailed the young conductor as, " A man of scope and vision, whose ideas for future development of the Academy will enhance its contribution to the community, as well as to the world of music."

Mr. Alcantara is deeply committed to the training of young musicians, and served on the faculty of the University of Michigan as Director of Orchestras from 1968 to 1974. During this period he was also Music Director and Conductor of the Grand Rapids Symphony, and was responsible for founding the highly successful Mozart Festival in that city.

(M O R E)

ALCANTARA APPOINTMENT 2-2-2

Equally in demand on orchestra and opera podiums, in recent seasons Maestro Alcantara has conducted a number of major opera companies throughout the United States and South America. Included were 1978 Metropolitan Opera tour performances in Detroit and at Wolf Trap, his 1977 debut with the Washington Opera and his August, 1980 debut with the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires.

Mr. Alcantara has appeared regularly with the San Diego Opera, most recently in their 1980 season opener, "Elektra". Later this season he returns to guest conduct the Pittsburgh Opera.

Highlights of his 1981 season will include conducting debuts with the New York City Opera in both New York and Los Angeles, the Miami Opera and a return engagement with the San Diego Opera.

An internationally renowned guest conductor with orchestras, Mr. Alcantara has directed the Berlin Radio Orchestra, National Orchestra of Spain, Copenhagen Radio Orchestra, National Orchestra of Mexico and the Mozarteum at Salzburg among others. U. S. orchestras he has conducted include the Detroit, San Antonio, Pittsburgh, Honolulu and the Miami Philharmonic. During the 1980-81 season, he will guest conduct the Kansas City Philharmonic.

Mr. Alcantara has also conducted a number of summer festival orchestras, including Aspen, Interlochen, Meadowbrook, and the Grant Park Festival in Chicago.

(M O R E)

ALCANTARA APPOINTMENT 3-3-3

Theo Alcantara was born in Cuenca, Spain, in 1941, and began his musical training as a choir boy in a Spanish seminary at the age of seven. He later received diplomas in piano and composition from the Real Conservatorio de Musica in Madrid, and a diploma in conducting from the Akademi Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria.

In 1964, Maestro Alcantara was engaged as conductor with the Frankfurt Opera Theatre in Germany, an appointment he held until 1966.

The new Artistic Director of the Music Academy is the recipient of an award for conducting excellence from the Mozarteum, as well as a winner of the Dimitri Mitropoulos International Conducting Competition in New York. In 1977, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Award from the Michigan Foundation of the Arts.

Mr. Alcantara lives near Phoenix with his wife, Susan, a cellist from Michigan, and their two young sons.

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Approx. 3,750 words

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Alcantara

THE NEW DON OF MIRAFLORES

1581

by

Jan Seagrave

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THE NEW DON OF MIRAFLORES

by

Jan Seagrave

I believe in coincidences.

A mossed-over courtyard is hidden in the northern corner of the Music Academy of the West. The fountain has long been dry. Pine needles mulch the pavement. But through the leaves the colors of a ceramic tiled stone bench shine like stained glass. The tiles depict a lean knight and a fat squire wandering, in comic-strip sequence, through villages and pastures. One tile gives a title to the story: EN UN LUGAR DE LA MANCHA.

It came as no surprise when I heard the chords of Richard Strauss's "Don Quixote" coming from the concert hall a few yards away. By the time I reached the Academy's parking lot, I half

expected to see Rozinante and Dapple tethered there.

I had come to meet the Academy's new Artistic Director. The tall oaken doors of the administrative building, Miraflores, opened quickly, and out into the sun stepped briskly -- not the lanky knight, but a young man, just as adventurous. His hair was flaming orange. His eyes were prismatic in the sun. His name is Theo Alcantara, and his home land is Spain.

The maestro is energetic, compact, nearing forty in body but twenty in enthusiasm. He is idealistic, no doubt about it. An artist has to be. He speaks four languages, and the long English words come in fits and spurts. He is patient, though, and even meditative when he draws on his pipe.

"I do believe that I have the talent to teach, and to work with youngsters. I relate to them very well," he said. Mr. Alcantara ("al-CAHN-ta-rah," he will correct you) is also a family man, but he keeps his private life very private. His wife, Susan, is a tall slim brunette, an exquisitely-groomed cellist from Michigan and the mother of two boys.

"I have always dreamed, since I came to the United States, of having a music festival that would be run after my own style. I have very specific ideas about what I want to do here," he stated.

Theo Alcantara was named Artistic Director and Conductor of the Music Academy of the West Summer Festival last October, succeeding Maurice Abravanel who retired after 26 years of service. The new Director may finally get to realize his dream, but he will have to do so within the context of a music school with its own traditions and history.

The West has often appeared to the eastern American music establishment as something wooly, if not wild. Even more so in the years just after World War II. The two great American music schools at that time, Curtis and Juilliard, were both urging the establishment of a school in the West for the training of talented young American musicians. Curtis was refusing to accept auditions from western students, and Juilliard had 600 applicants on its waiting list.

With this crisis in mind, concert impresario Grace Denton invited 25 Santa Barbara and Los Angeles music patrons to a "Musical Discussion Luncheon" at the Montecito Country Club in September, 1946. Such notables as Mme. Lotte Lehmann, Werner Janssen, Doris Kenyon, Merle Armitage, and Isabel Morse Jones attended.

The result: the Music Academy opened on July 7, 1947, for the first of its eight-week summer sessions. The location was the Cate School for Boys in Carpinteria. The first Director was Isabel Morse Jones, then the music editor of the Los Angeles Times. The first faculty included Richard Bonelli, voice; Roman Totenberg, violin; The Griller Quartet from England; Harry Kaufman and Mildred Couper, pianists; Ernest Bloch, composer; and Dr. Richard Lert, orchestra.

Santa Barbara was "just far enough from Hollywood to receive its approbation (and we hope its money), but not its domination," said Ms. Jones. Appropriately, such screen stars as Ronald Coleman, Jeanette MacDonald, Walter Pidgeon, Doris Kenyon, and Nelson Eddy donated money or time to the new Scholarship Committee.

The years following the opening summer brought more support, more students, and more prestigious faculty. Composers Darius Milhaud and Arnold Schoenberg joined in 1948, and later composer Igor Stravinsky, and dancer/choreographer Martha Graham, and Metropolitan Opera baritone Martial Singher. Things were getting crowded. They needed more space.

In 1951 the problem was solved. Miraflores was the name of the Montecito estate of Mr. and Mrs. John Percival Jefferson. When Mrs. Jefferson died in 1950, Helen Marso, Mr. Jefferson's secretary, donated the house and gardens to the Music Academy as a memorial to its former owners.

Miraflores had been in the Jefferson family since 1915. Life-sized oil portraits of the Jeffersons still hang in the main hall of the Academy, now itself dubbed Miraflores. The painting is surrounded by antique hutches, Persian rugs, and chartreuse velvet chairs. It must have been an elegant life, filled with music, literature, and all the arts. An atmosphere of luxury still pervades the rooms.

The transplanted Academy appointed a new Executive Director in 1951, John Charles Thomas. He was succeeded a year later by Ruth Cowan. In this period, Lotte Lehmann began her eleven-year career as a great teacher of opera and lieder at the Academy. In 1953, Mme. Lehmann's friend, Bruno Walter, suggested that she contact Maurice Abravanel, Conductor of the Utah Symphony, to be the Academy's new Music Director.

Along with Lotte Lehmann, Abravanel began staging an opera each summer in the mid-'50's, now a Santa Barbara tradition.

Martial Singer returned to the Academy to take over for the retiring Lotte Lehmann in 1962, and assured that the tradition would be continued in the best of styles. World-famous cellist Gabor Rejto began teaching at the Academy in 1949, and has been with the Academy longer than any other faculty member. Pianist Jerome Lowenthal and violinist Zvi Zeitlin also have served for many years, and will continue to teach in the 1981 Summer Festival. Faculty, students, guests, and audiences are held under the watchful eye of Susanne L. Byars, the current Executive Director.

The Academy's list of graduates is just as impressive as its faculty. Since it began training young musicians, the school has produced such world-renowned artists as vocalists Marilyn Horne, Grace Bumbry, Marni Nixon, Judith Beckmann, Michael Rosness, Thomas Moser, and Riccardo Calleo. Cellist Jeffrey Solow, and violinists Lynn Blakeslee and Young Uck-Kim hail from the Academy. The conservatory has also nurtured several well-known pianists: Mona Golabek, Paul Schenly, Dickran Atamian, and Gregory Allen.

These performers, and their lesser-known classmates, have all been put through the paces at the Academy in a rigorous program of classes, performances, and individual coaching. The Summer Festival opens in June and closes in August. In the past, it has been a summer training program for professionally-oriented students, with advanced training for performance in voice, piano, and orchestra. Regular faculty, as well as guest soloists, teach the students who come from all over the country. All of the students and the guest artists have been required to give

public performances, including an opera and a final Concerto Night, usually in the Lobero Theatre in downtown Santa Barbara.

But all of this is in the past. It may change.

"I don't see the Academy as either a high school or a college," exclaimed Mr. Alcantara. "Anybody, regardless of age, should be able to come and learn something. It should be like . . . a sanatorium? . . . a hospital? . . . no, an open clinic. I would like to have the best faculty you can find in the world, put it here, and help anybody with talent. Suppose you are a musician and you've been playing with a certain orchestra for many years, or you are a teacher. Your own talents have been neglected because you have had to play with that orchestra every day, or you have had to teach every day. If you would like to spend the summer searching for your own talents, renewing yourself, then this should be the place for it."

His h's are percussive; his r's are smoother than a purr; and he softens the harshness of any offending consonant. We lounged behind an immense polished table in the Board Room of the Academy, formerly the library of the Jefferson estate. The dark wood paneling was covered with fading tapestries. We were surrounded with gold and red gentility out for the hunt, with deer and falcon woven into forests, with a thousand eyes of banished creatures poaching on some lord's fief.

Mr. Alcantara lit a tobacco mixture redolent of herbs and blackberry leaves. He exhaled: "I am responsible for the standards of performance. Artistically speaking, it is entirely my responsibility to bring about a standard of excellence to the Academy, not only by means of my own performance as a conductor,

but I have to be up-to-date on all the performances, either by guest artists or students. And planning. I have to spend a lot of time calling artists all over the world that I would like to bring here, inviting them, discussing with them the jobs of teaching and performing."

This is what it means, he told me, to be an Artistic Director.

This summer the Academy will offer a wider range of performances open to the public. Every Saturday night of the season will be a concert by the Academy's student orchestra--a total of 6 concerts. On Tuesday nights, chamber music will be offered. The guest artists will perform either in recitals in this chamber music series, or will appear with the orchestra. Finally, the annual opera will be given towards the end of the season, this year being Gounod's "Romeo et Juliette."

The maestro intends on making other changes, too. The most important difference, he feels, is a change in repertoire.

"First of all, you will find that I--although I am not American--am very much an American promoter. Probably most of my programs will always have some American composer on them, at least in the orchestral concerts. I am also very fond of performing works by very well-known composers, but not very well-known works. You may hear not Tchaikovsky's Fifth or Sixth Symphonies, but you may hear the No. 1 or the No. 2, or his 'Manfred' symphonic poem, which nobody plays. It's a gorgeous work, but it's neglected. I would like the students to get to know composers' works that they would not normally be exposed to in other places."

Mr. Alcantara has ideas for the chamber symphony, a small group of musicians selected from the larger student Festival Orchestra. It will concentrate more on the compositions of the 17th and 18th centuries, using an extra day of rehearsals per week for the preparation of concerts.

The new Artistic Director wants to make the Academy more cosmopolitan, less regional. "Another thing I am interested in is starting an exchange program with other countries all over the world," he told me. "For example, France may be interested in sending three students this summer. There is a possibility for a couple of students from Argentina and Spain. So, you'll find, I don't think small."

One further innovation in programming may be the addition of some modern music. "I think you are going to see more contemporary music than in the past," Mr. Alcantara said, "but then, they haven't played any contemporary music at all here before. You're going to see a better balance."

Imperceptibly at first, but now assertively, a pianist in the adjoining Lotte Lehmann Hall was practicing. It must have been Mozart. The notes streamed in as the late afternoon sun did through the tall French windows.

"Vitality!" the maestro burst out. "I would like to project the fact that this is a very energetic organization. After all, we are trying to attract the young. I would like this to be something that projects itself as bright and cheerful--people should know that we are in California, and I'm attracted by the idea of the sun and the beach. I would hope that the students, but also the public in general, will realize that the Academy

is a really neat place to go in the summer."

The new Director related his problems in dispelling the apparent mystery of Music Academy. "Because of trying to bring certain artists here next summer, I had to speak to certain managements in New York with whom I deal as the Phoenix Symphony Director. When I mentioned this post at the Academy to them, they said, 'What is that?' Music Academy has been operating in such small circles."

The Academy has been identified in his mind with "a monastery," he admitted. "They offered me this job in the last year--February or March of 1979. They kept sending me their brochures, and I really didn't think I wanted to come here. Then I said, OK, I'll come in the summer and take a look at the place. And when I came here--why, this is a beautiful place, a gorgeous place."

The new image really is not hard to come by. The Music Academy, at 1070 Fairway Road, is nestled between the lush green lawns of the Biltmore and the half-wilderness of the Andree Clark Bird Refuge. The Miraflores estate crowns a hill on Channel Drive, just yards from a cliffside over the ocean. There is something tropical in the air; perhaps it is the comments of parrots which fly above the palms.

Waiting one day in the Academy's gardens for a second interview with Theo, I was approached by a man close to tears. I had noticed him leading his wife and small boy through the hedge mazes, always looking up as though trying to see the tops of the pines. I was mistaken for a staff member.

"Do you know where the butterflies went?" he begged of me.

"When I was here, there was a flock of monarch butterflies that would swarm and finally land on one tree. It would turn bright orange and black. Have you seen them?"

I fancied he was a returning student, now a violinist with some big eastern city, sharing his nostalgia with an unsuspecting family.

I hope he led his entourage into Abravanel Hall. This is the main performance space at the Academy, seating about 200. On that day, the Santa Barbara Symphony was using the auditorium for its rehearsal. The musicians, in tennis whites or hiking boots, moved quickly under the lime trees, calling to each other and laughing. They acted much the same as the students at the Summer Festival, humming snatches of some concerto, clowning around with their sundry musical instruments. It must have been like seeing a reunion of his classmates, for the butterfly man.

The gaping black case for a string bass stood like an open sarcophagus in the lobby of Abravanel Hall. Next to it was the second-most imposing item in sight: a near life-size oil portrait of a stalwart Greek with perfectly-styled curls, a perfectly-folded tunic, and the most astounding red and green eyeshadow ever created by a make-up man. No one had to tell me that that was operatic. The plaque on the portrait says "M. Singher as Orest in Strauss' ELEKTRA, Paris, 1934." Even as I stared at his likeness, I heard a young soprano being prodded and praised by her voice coach. It could have been he--back from the Met, out of costume, and several years the wiser.

Perhaps the butterfly man took his son to the arbor in the backyard of Miraflores, past the benches carved with voluptuous sphinxes. There, they would find under the wisteria or grape vines a series of painted bas-reliefs to confound even the most liberal of historians. One such panel depicts a noble sort of soldier in the poop of an awkward galleon, sailing impossibly along in a creek. His shield says FERDINAND DE SOTO and his unfurled flag boasts MISSISSIPPI RIVER. Another carving shows an Inca or an Aztec making pottery, with the misinterpretive label KABAL. The artist/perpetrator remains to the present a mystery.

The administrative building is a light pink stucco, done with Spanish rococo flair. Black wrought iron is curlicued around windows and porticoes. I entered from the back, from the arbor, and met Theo in the Executive Director's well-appointed office. His handshake is immediate and assuring. I ask him for his life story.

Theo Alcantara was born in Cuenca, Spain, in 1941. He began his musical training as a choir boy in a Spanish seminary.

"I have been interested in music since I was 7 years old. I was 14 when I decided to leave the seminary. I moved to Madrid, where I lived alone in an apartment. I studied at the Real Conservatorio de Musica in Madrid. While I was studying for the diplomas in piano and composition, I became the youngest member of the faculty there. I was teaching students who were much older than I. When I became 20 years old, I went to Austria to study conducting, to the Akademi Mozarteum in Salzburg. I was immediately appointed to their faculty as well. After

four years there, I got my degree in conducting. I took my first job as a conductor with the Frankfurt Opera Theatre in Germany in 1964.

"Then, I discovered that I did not want to live in Germany. So, I came to this country. And when I came here, I discovered how important education is here--education in terms of the universities. The universities in Europe are different; there, music is taught in conservatories, not universities. I became interested in this, so the first thing I did was to find a job that would teach me something about the system in the United States. The University of Michigan hired me in 1968 as Director of Orchestras. I stayed there for several years, but I was both conducting professionally [the Grand Rapids Symphony] and teaching [and founding the Mozart Festival in that city]. I was doing too much. In 1974, it just didn't work out. Since then, I never thought I would be interested in teaching again, but I found myself in the last few years going to more and more festivals." Theo has conducted at Aspen, Interlochen, Meadowbrook, and the Grant Park Festival in Chicago.

Theo does not boast. He does not tell you that he is an internationally known guest conductor, equally in demand on orchestra and opera podiums in Europe, South America, and the United States. Highlights of his 1981 season include conducting debuts with the New York City Opera in both New York and Los Angeles, the Miami Opera, and a return engagement with the San Diego Opera. Currently, he is Music Director of the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra, probably the most important orchestra in the state.

From October to May, Theo and Susan and their children will live in Phoenix. "Of course, in the summer in Phoenix, the symphony doesn't work," he says. "It's too hot." Up to 115 degrees. So, come June, Theo and his family will move to Santa Barbara for the Music Academy Summer Festival. A simple move.

Actually, the move from leading professional musicians to running a music school may be more difficult than simple. The Music Academy has some lofty standards to uphold. I asked the maestro to summarize its objectives.

"We have four goals, really. One of them is to preserve the cause of great music. Two, to encourage young musicians and give them an opportunity to study with the masters. Three, to provide the form for opportunities for the professionally-oriented. Four, to continue to enhance the cultural life of Santa Barbara with the Academy's exciting and adventurous Summer Festival." He gives a devilish grin at his thorough and rapid reply. "You see, I don't beat around the bush!"

For the 1981 Summer Festival, Mr. Alcantara has lined up an impressive list of guest artists: violinist Itzak Perlman, cellist Nathaniel Rosen, the Cleveland Quartet, sopranos Judith Beckmann and Benita Valente, and Tito Capobianco, the General Director of the San Diego Opera. Rainer Miedel, Director of the Seattle Symphony, will be a guest conductor. These musicians will teach the Academy's students in master classes, as well as perform in public as part of the Festival series.

Maestro Alcantara will conduct both the symphony and the opera orchestras at the Academy. I asked him how he would decide which compositions they would perform.

"There are two different approaches," he replied. "In a professional orchestra, you have to remember that there is a concert hall that hopefully will be filled every time we play. If it is not, we obviously go out of business. That has to be pretty much in the mind of the music director. Of course, you program so you can bring those others along with you, and educate them as well. Here, at the Academy, the main purpose must be one of education. The students must play the kind of repertoire that will teach them the standard orchestra repertoire. But, it is also true that you have to fill the concert hall. Obviously, people would like to hear certain works that they recognize, that they can identify. That's one way. The long-lasting one, however, is to develop a following. The most obvious answer is to play everything so beautifully, that no matter what you play, people will always want to hear you. That's more important than anything else I can mention."

How does a conductor get the results he wants from his musicians?

"Basically, I often feel that as a conductor, I am a driver. You are a good driver or a bad driver. You have to know all the traffic violations. If conductors were to get fined for all the mistakes they make, you would be surprised what it would cost them! There are many things that you can do to either help out or interfere with the orchestra. Perhaps the most obvious thing is this: if there is a certain passage that requires a very small beat, a conductor without much experience or talent might use a very big beat. That will automatically get in the way of the musicians, in many ways.

You just have to know your craft; you have to know your skill."

What is the most difficult thing for a conductor to convey to his players?

"What conductors try to do the most, like every performer, is to inspire. That often doesn't come through with a big or small beat--although a good beat helps. But that inspiration comes from within the soul, and that you can't describe, as far as I am concerned. It either happens or it doesn't."

It's also the point where words stop and music begins. I sensed the time had come to take my leave. Theo left to board a plane bound for his home in the desert. I walked back to the beach, pausing once again at that colorful tile bench. The last square in the comic strip showed the knight in chain mail, helmet, yellow vest, green pantaloons, and maroon leggins -- in bed! A curious poem, in Spanish, was printed with great care underneath. Perhaps it will inspire the fledgling virtuosi who study here to regard the wheel of fortune with the good humor of Cervantes:

"Here lies the noble fearless knight,
Whose valor rose to such a height;
When Death at last had stuck him down,
His was the victory and renown.
He wrecked the world of little prize,
And was a bugbear in men's eyes;
But had the fortune in his age
To live a fool and die a sage."